DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 765 CS 205 428

AUTHOR Bryan, Mary Anna: Agee, W. Hugh
TITLE Poetry Preferences among High School Students. Studies in Language Education Report No. 37.
INSTITUTION Georgia Univ., Athens. Dept. of Language Education.
PUB DATE Dec 79
NOTE 47p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences: Comparative Analysis: Elementary Secondary Education: High School Students: Interest Research: Literary Conventions: *Literature Appreciation: *Poetry: *Reading Interests: *Student Attitudes: *Student Interests
IDENTIFIERS *Preferences

ABSTRACT

Results of a survey of 165 high school students' responses to 100 poems were analyzed and compared tc the poetry preferences of elementary school students in a similar study conducted by Ann Terry in 1974. The results showed that humorous and narrative poems appealed to a wide age range. Four of the five most popular poems in the high school survey were narratives. Students of all ages tended to dislike the same poetic forms, especially haiku and free verse. Of the 25 least popular poems in both the high school and the Terry surveys, 13 poems appeared on both lists. In the high school survey, most of the preferred poems were rhymed, while most of the least liked poems were not rhymed. The older students responded more positively to poems in which scund was subtle or musical in quality. Students did not like poems that they did not understand, explaining the unpopularity of haiku. Figurative language and imagery made poetry difficult to understand among the young children in the Terry study and the high school students with low reading comprehension. Since a number of poems with involved imagery and figurative language got favorable responses in the high school survey, maturity seems to be an important factor in the positive response to these poetic devices. (RL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED182765

POETRY PREFERENCES AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Mary Anna Bryan
Central Gwinnett High School
Lawrenceville, Georgia

and

W. Hugh Agee
University of Georgia

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary Anna Bryan
W. Hugh Agee

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Studies in Language Education, Report No. 37
Department of Language Education, The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia
December 1979

CS205428

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	3
CHAPTER 2. METHOD OF PROCEDURE	8
CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' POETRY PREFERENCES	12
Forms of Poems	12
Poetic Elements	18
Content of Poems	19
Age of Poems	23
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS	26
Differences among Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Students' Poetry Preferences	26
Differences between Boys' and Girls' Poetry Preferences	30
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS	33
CHAPTER 6. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING	35
APPENDIX A. POEMS SELECTED FOR SURVEY	37
APPENDIX B. POETRY PREFERENCE INSTRUMENT	40
APPENDIX C. TABLES OF MOST POPULAR AND LEAST POPULAR POEMS IN TERRY'S SURVEY	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43

INTRODUCTION

Among small children poetry is a most enjoyable form of literary expression. Their response to it is harmonious, natural. But in about the fifth grade, many children begin to change their attitude; they decide that poetry is not for them.[1] By the time these children have reached high school, they have developed a positive dislike for the genre. Several explanations may account for this change of attitude. One may be that past generations of children were turned away from verse because of required memorization. For today's youth, however, this reason is no longer valid. A more likely cause might be that inappropriate or unappealing selections of poetry are foisted upon them them through their texts and by their teachers. Poetry found in high school textbooks has generally been placed there for didactic reasons rather than for enjoyment. Studies by Coast (1928) and Tom (1969) indicate that poetry teachers choose to share with their students is usually the older, more traditional narrative kind, not necessarily what students find most enjoyable.

Another reason for the dislike of poetry among older youth may be that they feel that they have outgrown poetry. In her review of Children's Poetry Preferences by Ann Terry, Emily Marston (1975, p. 110) makes the following observation:

> The peculiar difficulty of poetry may lie not only in the fact that it presents to the reader a task of requiring a high level of thinking but that it does so through the use of devices which on the surface resemble aspects of preoperational thinking. It

---

[1] Virginia Haviland and William Jay Smith, Children and Poetry (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1959), p. iv.

> looks easy. In fact, it looks so easy that . . . there is a point in the development at which, not having perceived its real complexity, the reader may decide that poetry is kid stuff.

Thus the challenge for the teacher of older children is to help them add to their intuitive, uninhibited, pleasurable response to poetry a more mature, subtle enjoyment which is derived from the "high level of thinking." The task of the teacher would be much easier if she could begin by using poems that are naturally appealing to young people.

The purpose of this study is to explore some of the kinds of poems that high school pupils prefer. The design is based upon the study by Ann Terry, Children's Poetry Preferences: A National Survey of Upper Elementary Grades (1974). Specifically, the present study addressed the following objectives:

1. To determine by means of a survey which of the selected poems are most enjoyable to high school students.
2. To analyze the most popular poems considering such characteristics as (a) form, (b) content, (c) certain poetic elements, and (d) age of poem.
3. To determine any relationships that might exist between students' choices and grade level and sex.

CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the first half of this century, especially during the 1920's and 1930's, numerous studies of children's interests in poetry were conducted, some with conflicting conclusions. Studies by Wissler (1921), Jordan (1921), and Dunn (1922) concluded that children had little interest in poetry. The poems for these three works, however, were drawn from reading series, anthologies, and previous research studies. Grant and White (1925) refuted Dunn's earlier conclusions. Their findings, based upon information gathered from public libraries in New York City and from twenty classrooms located in various parts of the United States, indicated that children show a substantial interest in poetry.

One problem that challenged investigators of the twenties was the proper placement of poems in grade levels. The Huber, Bruner, Curry study (1927) undertook to solve this problem. The researchers used 50,000 children, grades one through nine, and 1500 teachers in the two-year study. To determine which poems to include, they examined 900 courses of study, most of the commonly used textbooks, and asked for opinions from "expert teachers of poetry." The poems occurring most frequently were included in their study. A record was kept to determine which poems the children liked best and which they liked least. At the end of the study the researchers concluded that most poems were preferred more in certain grades than in others. The researchers also found that "expert teachers of poetry" could not accurately judge the appropriate grade placement of poems.

Other studies have also indicated that adults--teachers, librarians, children's literature specialists, anthologists--are not able to accurately select poems that children find most enjoyable. Eckert (1928), in a study involving 200 first, second, and third grade students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, used poetry selections from both textbook and non-textbook sources. The children were read poems and were asked which ones they preferred. Poems chosen from non-textbooks received the greatest number of first choices. Other results showed that poems chosen by adults for children were not the same as the children's choices. Studies by Mackintosh (1924), Kyte (1957), and Norvell (1958) reached similar conclusions.

Coast (1928) and Tom (1969) sought to determine the kinds of poems that teachers tend to select for their students and the influence teachers have upon preferences of the students. Their studies reached two conclusions: (1) the teacher's enthusiasm for a poem can influence the children's choice and (2) teachers tend to select the old, more traditional narrative poems to share with their children.

Numerous studies have tried to determine just what kinds of poems appeal most strongly to young people. Mackintosh found that children in grades three through five liked poems with child experience, dialect, humor, sadness, imagination, good story, and repetition. First graders surveyed by Bradshaw (1937) liked funny poems and poems that dealt with familiar experiences. Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders surveyed by Avagno (1956) gave the following reasons for liking a poem: musical tone, emotional tone, vocabulary, story, descriptions, religious aspects, moral value, everyday experiences, holidays, action, adventure, animals, nature, humor, imagination, difference, reality, and truthfulness. Hofer's sixth grade students (1956) indicated that they enjoyed poems that contained humor and a beat.

Norvell (1958) reported that children in grades three to twelve ranked the following high in interest: poems of humor, animals, patriotism, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. The results of the Nelson study (1966) of first, second, and third graders showed that they liked poems containing action, near-nonsense humor, childhood experiences, and a story line. The findings of the Terry survey (1974) were that children in grades four through six responded most favorably to contemporary poems, rather than traditional ones; poems dealing with enjoyable experiences familiar to today's child; poems that tell stories and/or have a strong element of humor; poems with rhythm and rhyme; poems that do not rely too heavily on complex imagery or subtly implied emotion.

On the secondary level, important studies to determine the kinds of poems that appeal to young people include the Kangley study (1938). The purpose of this study was to evolve criteria for the selection of suitable poetry for children of junior high school age. In order to establish the criteria, the researcher tested the appeal of contrasting types of poetry. The poems were categorized in the following manner: (1) simple descriptive images or involved imagery; (2) obvious sound effects (repetition, onomatopoeia) or subtle sound effects (variation or meter); (3) human intrest in nature or no human interest; (4) implied ethical lesson or direct ethical lesson; (5) commonplace subject matter or romantic subject matter; and (6) comic and absurd humor or whimsical and ironic humor.

In this study, selections by 328 eighth graders from paired-comparison poems showed that the poems in the first category were preferred. Characteristics that ranked high were obvious sound effects, commonplace subject matter, and obvious humor. Straight didactic matter, complex imagery and non-human

nature ranked low. It was found that students with high reading comprehension scores responded more favorably to the second category poems than did students with low reading comprehension scores who preferred obvious sound effects and obvious humor. Although students often could not explain the reasons for their preferences, the following preferences were stated in order of frequency: humor, marked rhythm, imagery, ethical purpose, and realism.

The Nelms study (1967) of poetry preferences of secondary school students had as its purpose to determine what characteristics of poetry were associated with the evaluations of a panel of sixteen "representative" tenth grade students. A random sample of 120 poems consisting of 100 poems selected from high school textbooks and twenty recently written poems were used. Students rated each of the poems on twenth-nine semantic differential scales after hearing each poem read by the same person on tape. (The students held copies of the poems.) The poems were presented in ten different sessions, twelve poems per session. A panel of seven sophisticated readers then reacted to each of the poems on ten scales reflecting characteristics of poetry. The poems were also classified according to topical content by experienced English teachers.

Multiple regression analysis led to the following conclusions:

(1) Students tended to prefer poems with narrative interest.

(2) The appeal of subject matter was an important factor in students' evaluations. They responded positively to subject matter which they considered realistic, masculine, emotional, unusual, youthful, and sincere.

(3) The topical contentswhich had the highest appeal to the

students were unusual people, moments of crisis, humor, war, history and social problems. Poems about nature, religion, emotions, romantic love, and sensory impressions had little appeal.

(4) Students' ratings on scales for clarity, vividness, meaningfulness, obviousness, and order suggested that comprehension was an important factor.

(5) There was no evidence in this study to support the usual contention that students prefer poetry with regular rhyming schemes and rhythmic patterns.

(6) Students tended to prefer good modern poems over British and American "classics."

(7) Students had low interest in the brief lyric expressions of emotions, moods, or sensory impressions but responded to the development of a narrative or thematic climac, the cataloging of sensory impressions, and the use of a light satiric tone.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

This study is based upon the study by Ann Terry, Children's Poetry Preferences: A National Survey of Upper Elementary Grades (1974). Terry used a multi-stage stratified sample from over forty fourth, fifth and sixth grade classes representing various sections of the country and various school settings to determine which of a selected group of poems the children liked best and which they liked least. The twenty-five most preferred poems and the twenty-five least preferred poems were analyzed to determine what common elements most or least appealed to students. Terry also examined the relationship between students' poetry choices and grade level, sex, and type of school setting.

This study surveyed tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students in a high school located in the county seat of one of the five counties making up the greater Atlanta metropolitan area. The school has a student population of 538 females and 524 males. The ethnic composition is ninety-four percent white, five percent Black, and one percent other. Over two thirds of the graduates continue their education beyond high school. Approximately thirty-seven percent of the graduates attend a four-year college. The parents of over one-third of the students have attended or have graduated from college. Although the student body is predominately white middle class, there is a significant number of students who come from farm or rural backgrounds.

This study employed a total of one hundred poems: sixty-six

duplicated the poems in the Terry study and thirty-four were added from recently published anthologies designed specifically to appeal to adolescents, such as Some Haystacks Don't Even Have Needles, Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle, Pictures that Storm Inside My Head, and paperback anthologies published by Scholastic Book Services.. (See Appendix A, Poems Selected for the Survey.) Of the poems taken from the Terry study, twenty were from the list of most popular poems and twenty-two from the list of least popular poems. Some of the poems that Terry included in her survey were omitted because of the obvious appeal to a much younger audience. The thirty-four poems that were selected from current anthologies dealt mainly with adolescents--their experiences, their relationships, their interests. Several poems had love themes: boy and girl, man and woman, parent and child. Also included were poems with science fiction themes. Humorous poems from The Last Laugh, a collection of satiric writings, were added to enable students to respond to more sophisticated humor.

All of the poems were categorized according to content and form. Some of them were further coded by poetic elements to indicate that they had notable characteristics of sound, figurative language and imagery. The content category had eight areas: (1) people, (2) experiences to which adolescents can relate, (3) fantasy and science fiction, (4) animals, (5) nature, (6) things, (7) social commentary and/or commentary on life, and (8) humor. The six form categories included (1) free or unrhymed verse, (2) lyric-descriptive (personal and descriptive poetry with no prescribed length or structure that possesses a singing quality), (3) narrative (verse that related a particular event or episode, or tells a long tale), (4) rhymed verse, (5) limerick, and (6) haiku.

A few poems were further classified according to the time period in which they were written. The time periods were defined as (1) traditional, the poems considered classics that have stood the test of time, and (2) contemporary or modern poems, those written recently that focus on modern contemporary times.

Patricipating in the survey were 165 tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. Table 1 indicates a breakdown of students by grade and six.

Table 1

Breakdown of Students by Grades and Sex

	Sex		
Grade	Male	Female	Total
10	19	37	56
11	27	28	55
12	26	28	54

Students were presented with ten poems a day. They listened to the words recorded on a cassette tape and at the same time could read them from ditto sheets. Following the presentation of each poem, students recorded their response in a booklet with separate pages for each day's poems. On each page were listed the titles of the ten poems for that day, a place to check whether or not the students had heard the poem before, and the response rating scale. At the top of the first page was a place for the students to write their names, grades, ages, and sex. See Appendix B for a copy of the first page of the poetry preference instrument. The response rating scale was divided into five choices: "Great!," "Like," "O.K.," "Not O.K.," "and "No!" For two of the poems heard each day the students wrote a brief comment giving specific

reasons for liking or disliking them. These comments were helpful in determining what poetic features influenced student choices. The one hundred poems were presented over a period of ten consecutive school days. The time for listening-reading and recording responses ranged from fifteen to twenty minutes.

After completion of the survey, the response instruments were separated by grade levels. From each grade level was drawn a random sample of responses of ten boys and ten girls, making a total of sixty responses.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' POETRY PREFERENCES

The poetry choices designated by the sixty randomly selected students were recorded and analyzed to identify the twenty-five most popular (see Table 2) and the twenty-five least popular poems (see Table 3). In tabulating choices, the student ratings of "Great!" and "Like" were counted as positive responses; "Not OK" and "No!", as negative responses.

The most popular poems were analyzed to determine which poetic characteristics seemed to account for their popularity. Characteristics that were considered included (1) form, (2) poetic elements, (3) content, and (4) age of poem.

Forms of Poems

Certain poems were selected as representative of the following poetic forms: free verse, lyric/descriptive, narrative, rhymed verse, limerick, and haiku. (See Table 4 for a comparison of students' preferences for form.)

A poem using the limerick form received the most positive responses.

There was an old man of Blackheath,
Who sat on his set of false teeth.
Said he, with a start,
Oh, Lord, bless my heart!
I've bitten myself underneath!"
--Unknown

The students were not asked to write comments about this particular poem; however, their spontaneous oral responses gave clues as to why they liked it so well. They were delighted by the combined elements of form, humor, and surprise. Two of the five limericks included in this study were among the best liked. The other limerick preferred by high school students was

Table 2

The Most Popular Poems

Title	Poet	N = 60 f	%
There was an old man of Blackheath*	Unknown	47	78.33
Annie's Song	John Denver	46	76.66
Little Miss Muffett	Paul Dehn	45	75.00
Traveling through the Dark	William Stafford	41	68.33
The Ballad of Ruby	May Sarton	41	68.33
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast*	John Ciardi	39	65.00
Eletelephony*	Laura E. Richards	39	65.00
Dreams**	Langston Hughes	38	63.33
There was a young lady of Niger*	Unknown	38	63.33
Too Blue	Langston Hughes	37	61.65
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	John Ciardi	35	58.33
We Real Cool*	Gwendolyn Brooks	33	55.00
Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley	Maurice Sagoff	32	53.33
Four Little Foxes	Lew Sarett	32	53.33
The Purist	Ogden Nash	30	50.00
Poor Old Lady	Rose Boone	29	48.33
Who Has Seen the Wind?**	Christina G Rossetti	29	48.33
Nancy Hanks	Stephen Vincent Benet	28	46.66
Annabel Lee	Edgar Allan Poe	28	46.66
Twenty-five	Rod McKuen	28	46.66
Daffodils	William Wordsworth	27	45.00
The Pickety Fence*	David McCord	27	45.00
Silver**	Walter de la Mare	27	45.00
Swift Things Are Beautiful	Elizabeth Coatsworth	27	45.00
Adventures of Isabel*	Ogden Nash	27	45.00

Note f = frequency, or number of students liking the poem; % = percentage of students liking the poem. To determine the number of students who reacted favorably to a poem, the categories "Great!" and "Like" on the response scale were combined.

* Poems rated among the most popular in the Terry survey
**Poems rated among the least popular in the Terry survey

Table 3

The Most Unpopular Poems

Title	Poet	N = 60 f	%
The Red Wheelbarrow*	William Carlow Williams	52	86.66
Haiku: "A bitter morning. . ."**	J. W. Hackett	42	70.00
The Modern Hiawatha	George A. Strong	40	66.66
The Emperor of Ice Cream	Wallace Stevens	39	65.00
Haiku: "An old silent pond. . ."**	Basho	36	60.00
Haiku: "Little knowing. . ."*	Issa	34	56.66
The Base Stealer*	Robert Francis	34	56.66
Haiku: What happiness. . ."**	Buson	32	53.33
Betty Barter**	Unknown	31	51.66
Mean Song**	Eve Merriam	31	51.66
Phizzog*	Carl Sandburg	30	50.00
Haiku: "How Sadly. . ."**	Issa	30	50.00
Haiku: "A cooling breeze. . ."**	Onitsura	30	50.00
Street Windows*	Carl Sandburg	30	50.00
The Forecast*	Dan Jaffe	29	48.33
April Rain Song*	Langston Hughes	29	48.33
An Easy Decision	Kenneth Patchen	29	48.33
Arithmetic	Carl Sandburg	28	46.66
A Dedication to my Wife	T. S. Eliot	27	45.00
Haiku: "Spring departing. . ."**	Basho	27	45.00
The Pasture*	Robert Frost	27	45.00
On the Vanity of Earthly Greatness	Arthur Guiterman	26	43.33
The Ceiling	Theodore Roethke	26	43.33
Buffalo Dusk*	Carl Sandburg	26	43.33
Janet Waking	John Crowe Ransom	25	41.33

Note f = frequency, or number of students disliking the poem; % = percentage of students disliking the poem. To determine the number of students who reacted unfavorably to a poem, the categories "Not OK" and "No!" on the response scale were combined.

* Poems rated among the least popular in the Terry survey
** Poems rated among the most popular in the Terry survey

Table 4

Comparison of Students' Preferences for Forms of Poems

Form	Number of choices in top 25 poems	Number of choices in bottom 25 poems
Free verse	1	9
Lyric/descriptive	2	1
Narrative	7	2
Rhymed verse	13	6
Limerick	2	0
Haiku	0	7

"There was a young lady of Niger."

There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside
And the smile on the face of the Tiger
--Unknown

The comments below taken from the response booklets are typical of the responses to this poem.

"I like limericks. Some of them I remember well." (boy, grade 11)

"It's cute. It rhymes, and it doesn't bore you." (girl, grade 10)

"It was funny, and it made a long story short." (boy, grade 10)

The narrative form was one which was popular with adolescents. Three poems high on the most preferred list were "Traveling through the Dark," "The Ballad of Ruby," and "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast." In the case of "Traveling through the Dark," the strong narrative line offset student expressed aversion to unrhymed poems.

TRAVELING THROUGH THE DARK

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon;
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold,
I dragged her off, she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason--
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all--my only swerving--,
then pushed her over the edge into the river.
William Stafford

The following comments illustrate the reason why young people liked this poem.

"I like it because it tells a story." (boy, grade 10)

"It was sad but good. I just like the way it was said." (boy, grade 11)

"Oh, I love this poem! It must have been written by a very fine poet!!" (girl, grade 10)

It is interesting to note that "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast," which placed first in the Terry survey, placed sixth in this one. Two other narrative poems, "Traveling Through the Dark" and "The Ballad of Ruby," were rated higher. These two were told from an adult point of view and had a serious tone, whereas "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast" was written from a child's point of view and was in a lighter vein.

The most unpopular verse forms proved to be the haiku and free verse.

Of the nine haikus included in this survey, seven were rated among the least liked. In order to determine whether or not a continued exposure might influence student ratings, the haikus were distributed over a nine-day period. There does appear to be a slight positive turn in the response over the course of the survey. "A bitter morning . . .," the first haiku presented, received a negative rating of 70.00%. The final haiku, presented on the last day, received a negative rating of 53.33%, while the responses to the intervening haikus indicated a drift toward fewer negative responses. Students were asked to write comments on the final haiku.

What happiness
Crossing this summer river
Sandals in hand!
Buson

"It has no meaning." (girl, grade 10)

"It's too short and it doesn't make sense" (girl, grade 10)

"The only good part is that it's only three lines." (boy, grade 11)

"There is no real need for retarded poems like that!" (boy, grade 11)

The two characteristics that seemed to bother students most about the haiku were (1) the poem's brevity and (2) the inability of the students to get meaning from it.

Free verse was also unpopular among the students. Nine of the poems selected as representative of this form were among the twenty-five least liked poems; only one, "Twenty-five," was preferred by students. Most of the poems classified as lyric/descriptive fell in the middle range of fifty poems. Of the eleven poems so classified, only two, "Annie's Song" and "Too Blue," were among the most popular and only one, "April Rain Song," among the least popular.

Other than the narrative form, the poetic form to which students responded most positively was rhymed verse. More written comments by students contained references to rhyme--either its presence or its absence--than to

any other quality.

> "It ("Pickety Fence") sounded good because it rhymed." (boy, grade 11)
>
> "It ("Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo") rhymes good." (boy, grade 11)
>
> "I like it ("Daffodils") because it had rhyming words and talks about the countryside." (boy, grade 10)

Poetic Elements

Students' responses to designated poems containing notable elements of sound and figurative language and imagery were examined. "Mean Song" and "Betty Barter," two poems liked by Terry's elementary students, were not liked by the high school students. Instead, the older children preferred verse with musical qualities. They chose melodious poems such as "Annie's Song," "Silver," "Dreams," "Too Blue," and "Annabel Lee." Many appeared to agree with the comments of a twelfth grade girl who wrote: "It's fascinating how one can make words sound like music."

Table 5

Comparison of Students' Preferences for Poetic Elements

Poetic Element	Number of choices in top 25 poems	Number of choices in bottom 25 poems
Sound	2	3
Figurative Language and Imagery	6	2

High school students were more receptive to poems with figurative language and imagery than were their younger counterparts in the Terry

study. Their large positive response to "Annie's Song" may be discounted in part because many of them recognized it as the John Denver hit, but their response was also positive to "Dreams," "Silver," and "Who Has Seen the Wind?", poems that were among the most disliked by children in the Terry survey. In addition, they gave high ratings to "Daffodils" and to "Swift Things are Beautiful." Students wrote comments about two of these poems--"Silver" and "Daffodils." An eleventh grade girl wrote about "Silver": "It sounded so peaceful and it sounded so sad." "I like the softness of it," wrote a twelfth grade boy. An eleventh grade girl wrote the following about "Daffodils": "I like the picture in this one--dreamy, carefree days." And an eleventh grade boy commented about the same poem: "Pretty decent--creates a 'mind picture'."

Content of Poems

In analyzing poems in the designated content areas, the following categories received more positive than negative responses: humor, people, experiences to which adolescents can relate, fantasy and science fiction, and animals and nature. Things and social commentary and/or commentary on life received more negative responses.

Although humor by itself was not important enough to cause students to like a poem (at least six of the most disliked poems had humorous elements), it was a decisive factor in preference ratings. About half of the best liked poems contained humor. Humor was not as predominant a positive factor as it was in the Terry study. Terry commented, "A thread of humor seems to run through most of the preferred poems in differing degrees" (p.23).

Table 6

Comparison of Students' Preferences of Content

Content	Number of choices in top 25 poems	Number of choices in bottom 25 poems
People	4	0
Experiences to which adolescents can relate	6	4
Fantasy/Science Fiction	4	1
Animals/Nature	5	3
Things	2	5
Social commentary and/or commentary on life	2	6
Humor	6	2

In such least preferred poems as "The Modern Hiawatha," "Arithmetic," and "The Ceiling," students may have considered the humorous content somewhat silly or childish.

High school students indicated that they liked limericks because they were funny. They liked "We Real Cool," "Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo," and "Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley" for the same reason.

> "It ("We Real Cool") was a funny poem and I like it." (girl, grade 11)
>
> "It ("Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo") was humorous and it had a good rhyme." (boy, grade 11)
>
> "It ("Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo") had humor, rhyme, and was interesting (boy, grade 11)

Among poems preferred by students which dealt with people, "The Ballad of Ruby" tied for fourth position. It had at least two elements

that appealed to students--rhyme and narrative. A third element, emotional appeal, may also account for the poem's popularity, "Ruby" is the story of a little black girl who was one of the first to integrate a white school. The all-white sample in this survey seemed moved by the child's experience. Two other popular poems about people, "Annabel Lee" and "Nancy Hanks" may also have appealed to youthful sentiment.

Written comments on poems frequently dealt with the students' responses to experiences to which they could relate. Although many young people liked "We Real Cool" because they thought it was funny, more liked it because they felt it spoke directly to them.

WE REAL COOL

The Pool Players
Seven at the Golden Shovel

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.
--Gwendolyn Brooks

"I like it because I could identify with it. I've also had thoughts of leaving school and being cool." (girl, grade 12)

"Not easy to identify with for me. But I see a lot of people that I can relate it with." (girl, grade 12)

"A lesson can be learned from this poem." (boy, grade 11)

"Traveling through the Dark" was another poem to which students related--both positively and negatively.

"I like it because it showed some feeling." (girl, grade 11)

"It was meaningful. It makes you stop and think and feel sad." (boy, grade 11)

"I don't like talking about death. It's depressing." (girl, grade 11)

"I dislike it because of cruelty to animals." (boy, grade 11)

Other poems to which students seemed to relate included "Twenty-five," "Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast," "Too Blue," and "Annie's Song."

Although poems that were mainly descriptive of animals, such as "Seal" and "Catalogue," were not rated among the most preferred, students did respond positively to a number of poems in which animals were featured. In addition to "Traveling Through the Dark," they liked "Four Little Foxes" and "Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo." A tenth grade boy wrote about the latter poem, "I like poems about animals. I plan to keep exotic pets when I'm on my own." Sympathies were decidedly on the side of the animals: "I hate zoos so I didn't enjoy it ("Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo")." (girl, grade 10); "I hate to see animals caged up." (girl, grade 11). Even the tiger in "There was a young lady of Niger" had its supporters: "I'm glad he ate her. She deserved it." (boy, grade 11).

Unlike the younger students in the Terry survey who rated no poems about nature among their preferred twenty-five, high school students responded favorable to several nature poems or poems relying heavily upon nature imagery. Some of the poems they liked had romantic or dream-like qualities, as in "Annie's Song," "Silver," and "Daffodils." Others were characterized by soft rhymes and gentle rhythms as in "Swift Things are Beautiful,"

"Who Has Seen the Wind?" and "Dreams."

In the category of fantasy/science fiction, the students liked three fantasies, "Eletelephony," "Poor Old Lady," and "Adventures of Isabel," and one science fiction, "Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley." These four poems shared common elements of humor, exaggeration, and playful tone which appealed to the young people. Poems about things or poems containing social commentary and/or commentary on life were generally unpopular with students. They seemed to prefer people and animals to wheelbarrows and ceilings, and to prefer emotional stimulation to intellectual excitation.

Age of Poem

In considering the preferences for modern poems (those written recently about modern or contemporary topics) versus traditional poems (those that have stood the test of time), one must conclude from students' responses that students have no clear-cut preferences.

Table 7

Comparison of Students' Preferences
of Modern and Traditional Poems

Popular Modern Poems	Popular Traditional Poems
Little Miss Muffett (1967)	Who Has Seen the Wind? (1924)
Ballad of Ruby (1971)	Annabel Lee (1849)
We Real Cool (1959)	Daffodils (1798)
Twenty-Five (1967)	Silver (1920)
Unpopular Modern Poems	**Unpopular Traditional Poems**
The Forecast (1967)	Buffalo Dusk (1930)
	The Pasture (1936)
	April Rain Song (1920)

Three of the most popular modern poems contained rhyme and two contained humor. "Little Miss Muffett" is a modern twist to an old rhyme.

LITTLE MISS MUFFETT

Little Miss Muffett
Crouched on a tuffett,
Collecting her shell shocked wits
There dropped (from a glider)
An H-bomb beside her
Which frightened Miss Muffett to bits.
--Paul Dehn

"The Ballad of Ruby" is an emotionally charged narrative about a little black girl. "We Real Cool" uses youthful slang to express a youthful condition. And "Twenty-five" is a Rod McKuen reminiscence of adolescent experiences. It is not surprising that these poems were included among the best liked modern poems. What is surprising is the number of modern poems that drew tepid responses from young readers. Except for "Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley," which is funny as well as having a story line, none of the science fiction poems made the top twenty-five. Neither did "Corner" nor "Fifteen," poems about youth and motorcycles, nor "Miriam," a poem about a young girl's fantasies, rate high with adolescents. Poems describing modern mechanical devices such as "The Toaster" and "The Steam Shovel" also received scant positive response from students.

The positive responses by adolescents to traditional poems in this study is in sharp contrast to the lack of positive response to any of the designated traditional poems by the younger children as reported in the Terry study. In this study, the popular traditional poems, "Who Has Seen the Wind?", "Annabel Lee," "Daffodils," and "Silver," all seem to have certain elements in common. They have elements of romanticism and nostalgia; they are embroidered

with beautiful imagery; they have musical overtones. The most disliked traditional poems, "Phizzog," "Buffalo Dusk," and "The Pasture," have little or no rhyme. Two are by Carl Sandburg. His langauge may lack meaning for today's youth.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Two research hypotheses relating to high school students' poetry preferences were tested using the chi-square measurement.* These were (1) the proportion of individual students preferring each poem in the top twenty-five is the same for each grade level and (2) the proportion of boys preferring each poem of the top twenty-five is the same as the proportion of girls.

Differences Among Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Students' Poetry Preferences

The results of the analysis suggested that the chi-square was not large enough to permit a rejection of the first hypothesis. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students do appear to prefer the same poems. However, their preferences differ in degree. (See Tables 8, 9, 10.) Tenth and eleventh graders indicated a larger percentage of positive responses to the poems than did twelfth graders. Ninety-five percent of the tenth graders responded positively to the most liked poems and ninety percent of the eleventh graders responded positively. This compared to eighty percent of the twelfth graders.

Tenth graders rated higher than twelfth graders poems containing humor. Six of the top ten chosen by the young students contained humor as compared to two of the top ten chosen by twelfth graders. Twelfth graders were more receptive to imagery and metaphorical language. They

*Chi-square equals the sum of the differences between observed and expected frequencies for each poem.

Table 8

Poems Most Popular with Students in Grade 10

Title	No. of Students in Sample = 20	
	Frequency	Percent
There was an old man of Blackheath	19	95
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	16	80
Too Blue	16	80
Annie's Song	15	75
Ballad of Ruby	15	75
Eletelephony	15	75
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	15	75
There was a young Lady of Niger	14	70
Traveling through the Dark	13	65
Little Miss Muffett	13	65
We Real Cool	13	65
Dreams	12	60
Pickety Fence	12	60
Poor Old Lady	11	55
Four Little Foxes	11	55

Frequency = number of students liking poem
Percent = percentage of total sample

Table 9

Poems Most Popular with Students in Grade 11

Title	No. of Students in Sample = 20 Frequency	Percent
There was an old man of Blackheath	18	90
Annie's Song	16	80
Four Little Foxes	16	80
Traveling through the Dark	15	75
Little Miss Muffett	15	75
There was a young lady of Niger	14	70
Dreams	14	70
Too Blue	12	60
The Ballad of Ruby	12	60
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	12	60
Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley	12	60
Poor Old Lady	12	60
Annabel Lee	11	55
The Purist	11	55
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	11	55

Frequency = number of students liking poem
Percent = percentage of total sample

Table 10

Poems Most Popular with Students in Grade 12

Title	No. of Students in Sample = 20	
	Frequency	Percentage
Annie's Song	16	80
Little Miss Muffett	16	80
The Ballad of Ruby	14	70
Swift Things are Beautiful	14	70
Traveling through the Dark	13	65
Silver	13	65
Twenty-Five	13	65
Who Has Seen the Wind	12	60
Dreams	12	60
Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley	12	60
Daffodils	11	55
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	11	55
There was an old man of Blackheath	11	55
There was a young lady of Niger	10	50
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	9	45

Frequency = the number of students liking poems
Percent = percentage of total sample

chose, among their top ten, five poems with these elements--"Annie's Song," "Swift Things are Beautiful," "Silver," "Who Has Seen the Wind?" and "Dreams." Eleventh graders included only two poems--"Annie's Song" and "Dreams," and tenth graders only one--"Annie's Song."

Differences Between Boys' and Girls' Poetry Preferences

A chi-square analysis to determine if there were significant differences in boys' and girls' poetry preferences indicated that there was no significant difference. A comparison of the total number of positive responses to the top twenty-five poems by boys and by girls indicated that the boys registered more positive responses than did the girls--440 as compared to 411. The poems which boys rated higher than did the girls were "Poor Old Lady," "Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley," "The Purist," "Traveling through the Dark," and "Too Blue." Girls preferred "Eletelephony," "Daffodils," "Who Has Seen the Wind?" and "The Ballad of Ruby." (See Tables 11 and 12.)

To summarize these findings, it appears that tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students like the same poems. The number of twelfth grade positive responses, however, is smaller than the number of tenth and eleventh grade responses. Twelfth graders, particularly girls, respond more positively to poems with metaphorical and figurative language. Poetry preferences of boys and girls are similar. The number of boys responding positively is greater than the number of girls. Both boys and girls gave high ratings to animal poems, humorous poems and narrative poems.

Table 11

Poems Most Preferred by Girls

Title	No. of Students in Sample = 30	
	Frequency	Percent
There was an old man of Blackheath	26	86
Eletelephony *	24	80
The Ballad of Ruby	23	77
Annie's Song	22	73
Little Miss Muffett	22	73
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	20	67
Dreams	18	60
There was a young lady of Niger	17	56
Daffodils*	17	56
Who Has Seen the Wind? *	17	56
Traveling through the Dark	16	53
We Real Cool	16	53
Too Blue	15	50
Twenty-Five	15	50
Four Little Foxes	15	50
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	15	50

Frequency = number of students liking poem
Percent = percentage of total sample
*Preferred by girls only

Table 12

Poems Most Preferred by Boys

Title	No. of Students in Sample = 30	
	Frequency	Percent
Annie's Song	25	83
Traveling through the Dark	25	83
There was an old man of Blackheath	22	73
Little Miss Muffett	22	73
Too Blue	22	73
There was a young lady of Niger	21	70
Dreams	20	67
Why Nobody Pets the Lion in the Zoo	20	67
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	19	63
The Ballad of Ruby	18	60
Poor Old Lady*	18	60
Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley*	18	60
The Purist*	18	60
Twenty-Five	17	56
Four Little Foxes	17	56
We Real Cool	17	56

Frequency = number of students liking poems
Percent = percentage of total sample
* Preferred by boys only

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Young people, regardless of age, tend to like the same kinds of poetry. Humorous poems, popular with fourth, fifth, and sixth graders surveyed by Terry (1974), with elementary school children polled by King (1922) and Norvell (1958), were also popular with tenth graders surveyed by Nelms (1967) and with tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders polled in this study. However, this survey indicates that with older youth, humor alone is not as decisive a factor in the popularity of a poem as it is with younger children.

Narrative poems appeal to a wide age range. In this study, of the five most popular poems, four were narratives. The studies by Nelms, Terry, Mackintosh (1927), and others support this finding.

Students, regardless of age, tend to dislike the same poetic forms. Of the twenty-five least popular poems in the Terry survey and in this one, thirteen poems, or over half, were the same on both lists. Both surveys indicated that the haiku was the least popular poetic form. High school students specified that they did not like its brevity and its apparent lack of meaning.

Free verse was another form disliked by young people. In this survey most of the preferred poems were rhymed, whereas most of the least preferred poems were not. This finding does not agree with Nelms' conclusion that adolescents have no preference for poetry with rhyming schemes.

Students in this study generally gave lower ratings than did children in the Terry study to poems in which sound effects were strongly present or were a major factor in the poem. The older students responded more positively to poems in which sound was subtle or was musical in quality.

Students did not like poems which they did not understand. This is one explanation for the wide unpopularity of the haiku. "The Red Wheelbarrow," with its unsettling opening, "so much depends / upon" followed by imagery in its purest form was also not understood by high school students who, like their younger counterparts in the Terry survey, gave it more negative responses than any other poem. Typical comments written on another widely unpopular poem, "The Emperor of Ice Cream," were, "It doesn't make sense," and "I don't understand it."

Among younger children and older children with low reading comprehensions, figurative language and imagery made poetry difficult to understand. Terry, Weeks (1929) and Kyte (1947) reported that elementary school children do not prefer poems which rely on these poetic devices. Kangley found that junior high students with higher reading levels were more favorably disposed toward poetry with complex imagery than were students with lower reading comprehension scores. This study indicated that tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students responded favorably to a number of poems with involved imagery and figurative language. Thus, maturity seems to be an important factor in the positive response to these poetic devices.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

In this survey high school students were asked to give an immediate response to a poem after having heard it and read it one time. An examination of these spontaneous reactions served to point out the characteristics of poetry that either appealed to or repelled the students. Being aware of these characteristics may better enable teachers to share with their students the kinds of poems that will increase their interest in and appreciation for poetry.

Whether a poem is modern or traditional does not matter so much to young people as whether or not its contents are relevant and meaningful to them. Adolescents like poems about people and events to which they can relate; they like poems that express emotions and experiences that are part of their world.

Although some poems appeal to people regardless of their age, it is evident in comparing this study to the Terry study that poetry preferences do change with the development of the person. Poems considered "Great" by nine-year-olds may be considered silly by seventeen-year-olds, while poems that bring pleasure to seventeen-year-olds may have no meaning to nine-year-olds. For example, "Betty Barter" and "Mean Song," which were among the most popular with elementary age children, were among the least popular with high school students; whereas "Dreams," "Who Has Seen the Wind?" and "Silver," while preferred by older children, were among the least preferred by the younger ones. Thus age level is a factor to be

considered when selecting poetry for students.

Basic to the selection of any poem is that it be one from which students will receive meaning. In some poems meanings are simple enough to be understood, but they are couched in language which is too difficult. Teachers might overcome these barriers through discussion and repeated readings. There are other poems, however, that probably should not be used until students have acquired greater maturity. Possibly haikus with their subtle and emotional complexity and certainly poems with subject matter that lies beyond the experiences and concerns of youth fall into this category.

Few young people vehemently hate poetry; fewer still profess unequivocal love for it. The most frequently given response to the majority of poems in this survey was that the poem was "OK," indicating that high school students in general run neither hot nor cold toward poetry. If teachers desires to lure that vast middle group into a deeper personal involvement, they might try initially to bait them with poems that hook their interest. Young people respond to poems that have heart appeal. They like poems with a story line. They enjoy imagery and figurative language if these elements do not obscure meaning. For many young people rhyme is synonymous with poetry, and its absence is a stumbling block to their enjoyment. They like humor--not too sophisticated, not too childish. And if they think they detect any contrivance for cuteness or cleverness in a poem, they tend to reject it.

Of course, teachers cannot create within students an appreciation for poetry, but through judicious selection of poems to share with their students, they may be able to fan into flame any small spark of appreciation that exists.

APPENDIX A

POEMS SELECTED FOR THE SURVEY

Poems	Poets
First Day	
Poor Old Lady Swallowed a Fly*	Rose Boone
The Toaster*	William Jay Smith
To a Fighter Killed in the Ring	Lou Lipsitz
April Rain Song*	Langston Hughes
Four Ducks on a Pond	William Allingham
Dreams*	Langston Hughes
Fog*	Carl Sandburg
Pickety Fence*	David McCord
Eletelephony*	Laura E. Richards
Hod Putt	Edgar Lee Masters
Second Day	
The Heroes	Louis Simpson
Mean Song*	Eve Merriam
Poem to Mud*	Zilpha Keatley Snyder
Haiku: "A bitter morning . . ."*	J. W. Hackett
The Base Stealer*	Robert Francis
Introduction to Songs of Innocence*	William Blake
All Watched Over By Machines of Loving Grace	Richard Brautigan
Little Miss Muffett*	Paul Dehn
"O mistress mine"	William Shakespeare
We Real Cool*	Gwendolyn Brooks
Third Day	
Those Winter Sundays	Robert Hayden
Betty Barter*	Unknown
Aritbmetic*	Carl Sandburg
Symptoms of Love	Robert Graves
Who Has Seen the Wind?*	Christina G. Rossetti
Haiku: "How sadly the bird . . ."*	Issa
There Was an Old Man of Blackheath*	Unknown
Silver*	Walter de la Mare
December*	Sanderson Vanderbilt
Railroad Reverie*	E. R. Young
Fourth Day	
Why Nobody Pets the Lion at the Zoo	John Ciardi
Pity This Poor Monster Manunkind	e.e. cummings
Phizzog*	Carl Sandburg
Annie's Song	John Denver
Wild Nights	Emily Dickinson
Peter Piper*	Unknown

Poems	Poets
Nancy Hanks*	Stephen Vincent Benet
Haiku: "An old silent pond . . ."*	Basho
Corner	Ralph Pomeroy
There was a Young Lady of Niger*	Unknown
Fifth Day	
For a Dead Kitten*	Sara Henderson Hay
Blue Girls	John Crowe Ransom
The Red Wheelbarrow*	William C-rlos Williams
Southbound on the Freeway*	May Swenson
Twenty-Five	Rod McKuen
Haiku: "A cooling breeze . . ."*	Onitsura
An Easy Decision	Kenneth Patchen
The Builders*	Sara Henderson Hay
Too Blue*	Langston Hughes
Miriam	Howard Moss
Sixth Day	
The Ballad of Ruby	May Sarton
Science Fiction	Kingsley Ames
Cheers	Eve Merriam
Haiku: "Spring departing . . ."*	Basho
The Hairy Dog*	Herbert Asquith
Traveling Through the Dark	William Stafford
Bird in a Cage	Unknown
The Panther*	Ogden Nash
There was a an old man with a beard	Edward Lear
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*	Robert Frost
Seventh Day	
Steam Shovel*	Charles Malam
Hughbert and the Glue	Karla Kuskin
The Emperor of Ice Cream	Wallace Stevens
Lone Dog*	Irene Rutherford McLeod
The Forecast*	Jan Jaffe
Haiku: "Little knowing . . ."*	Issa
A Sleeper from the Amazon	Unknown
Seal*	William Jay Smith
Unfortunate Coincidence	Dorothy Parker
Daffodils*	William Wordsworth
Eighth Day	
Grizzly Bear*	Mary Austin
Catalogue*	Rosalie Moore
Haiku: "A cautious crow clings . . ."*	Basho
The Village Blacksmith*	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Swift Things are Beautiful*	Elizabeth Coatsworth
Buffalo Dusk*	Carl Sandburg
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast*	John Ciardi
The Ceiling*	Theodore Roethke
Someone*	Walter de la Mare
Fifteen	William Stafford

Poems	Poets
Ninth Day	
Four Little Foxes*	Lew Sarett
Frankenstein by Mary W. Shelley	Maurice Sagoff
Adventures of Isabel*	Ogden Nash
The Pasture*	Robert Frost
Sea Fever*	John Masefield
Annabel Lee	Edgar Allan Poe
Haiku: "Even as the snow fell . . ."*	Issa
Dream of the Black Mother	Kalurgano
The Purist	Ogden Nash
Shadows*	Patricia Hubbell
Tenth Day	
Janet Waking	John Crowe Ransom
The Walrus and the Carpenter*	Lewis Carroll
Questions*	Marci Ridlon
On the Vanity of Earthly Greatness	Arthur Guiterman
The Modern Hiawatha*	George A. Strong
Street Windows*	Carl Sandburg
There was a Young Lady whose Nose*	Edward Lear
A Dedication to my Wife	T. S. Eliot
warty bliggins, the toad	Don Marquis
Haiku: "What happiness . . ."*	Buson

* poems used in Children's Poetry Preferences by Ann Terry

APPENDIX B

POETRY PREFERENCE INSTRUMENT

Day 1

Name_____ Grade____ Age____ Sex____

	Heard Before	Great!	Like	OK	Not OK	No!
1. Poor Old Lady						
2. The Toaster						
3. To a Fighter Killed in the Ring						
4. April Rain Song						
5. Four Ducks on a Pond						
6. Dreams						
7. Fog						
8. Pickety Fence						
9. Eletelephony						
10. Hod Putt						

Tell why you liked/disliked the following poems:

Pickety Fence_____

_____

_____

Hod Putt_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

TABLE I

MOST POPULAR POEMS AS RECORDED IN CHILDREN'S POETRY PREFERENCES[1]

Title	Poet	N = 422 f	%
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	John Ciardi	384	90.99
Fire!Fire!	Unknown	376	89.09
There was an old man of Blackheath	Unknown	372	88.15
Little Miss Muffett	Paul Dehn	368	87.20
There once was a old kangaroo	Edward S. Mullins	362	85.79
There was a young lady of Niger	Unown	360	85.30
Hughbert and the Glue	Karla Kuskin	354	83.88
Betty Barter	Unknown	340	80.56
Lone Dog	Irene Rutherford McLeod	339	80.33
Eletelephony	Laura E. Richards	338	80.09
Questions	Marci Ridlon	337	79.85
Parking Lot	Marci Ridlon	332	78.67
The Ruckus	Dr. Seuss	332	78.67
The Pickety Fence	David McCord	320	75.82
We Real Cool	Gwendolyn Brooks	319	75.82
There was a young lady whose nose	Edward Lear	317	75.11
Adventures of Isabel	Ogden Nash	300	71.09
A Canner	Unknown	298	70.61
The Panther	Ogden Nash	298	70.61
Mean Song	Eve Merriam	294	69.66
Railroad Reverie	E. R. Young	285	67.53
Grizzly Bear	Mary Austin	281	66.58
Peter Piper	Unknown	280	66.35
I Wish That My Room Had a Floor	Gelette Burgess	274	64.92
Poem to Mud	Zilpha Keatley Snyder	273	64.69

Note: f = frequency, or numbers of students liking the poem; % = percentage of students liking the poem. To determine the number of students who reacted favorable to a poem, the categories "It's great!" and "I like it" on the response scale were combined.

[1]Terry, p. 15.

APPENDIX C

TABLE 2

LEAST POPULAR POEMS AS RECORDED IN CHILDREN'S POETRY PREFERENCES[1]

Title	Poet	N = 422 f	%
The Red Wheelbarrow	William Carlos Williams	270	63.98
Haiku: "A bitter morning . . ."	J. W. Hackett	254	60.18
April Rain Song	Langston Hughes	250	59.24
The Forecast	Dan Jaffe	241	57.10
Dreams	Langston Hughes	231	54.73
Shadows	Patricia Hubbell	231	54.73
The Base Stealer	Robert Francis	219	51.89
Haiku: "A cooling breeze . . ."	Onitsura	219	51.89
Haiku: "What happiness . . ."	Buson	215	50.94
December	Sanderson Vanderbilt	213	50.47
Haiku: "How sadly the bird . . ."	Issa	212	50.23
A Song of Greatness	Chippewa Indian Song	210	49.76
Haiku: "Spring departing . . ."	Basho	207	49.05
Catalogue	Rosalie Moore	205	48.57
Fog	Carl Sandburg	202	47.86
Phizzog	Carl Sandburg	201	47.63
Silver	Walter de la Mare	199	47.15
This Is My Rock	David McCord	198	46.91
Haiku: "A cautious crow . . ."	Basho	194	45.97
The Pasture	Robert Frost	193	45.73
Who Has Seen the Wind?	Christina Rossetti	184	43.60
Rudolph Is Tired of the City	Gwendolyn Brooks	177	41.94
Street Window	Carl Sandburg	176	41.70
Haiku: "Little knowing . . ."	Issa	172	40.75
Buffalo Dusk	Carl Sandburg	170	40.28

Note: f = frequency, or number of students disliking the poem; % = percentage of students disliking the poem. The categories "I dislike it" and "I hate it!" are combined in this table.

[1]Terry, p. 16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avegno, T. Sylvia. "Intermediate-Grade Choices of Poetry." Elementary English, XXXIII (November 1956), pp. 428-432.

Bradshaw, Ruth E. "Children's Choices in the First Grade." Elementary English Review, XIV (May 1937), pp. 168-176.

Coast, Alice B. "Children's Choices in Poetry as Affected by Teachers' Choices." Elementary English Review, V (May 1928), pp. 145-147.

Dunn, Frannie Wyche. Interest Factors in Primary Reading Material. Contributions to Education, No. 113. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921.

Eckert, Mollie H. "Children's Choices of Poems." Elementary English Review, V (June 1928), pp. 182-185.

Grant, Emma B., and White, Margaret L. "A Study of Children's Choices of Reading Materials." Teachers College Record, XXVI (April 1925), pp. 671-678.

Hofer, Louise B. "What Do Sixth Graders Really Like in Poetry?" Elementary English, XXXIII (November 1956), pp. 433-438.

Huber, Miriam B., Bruner, Herbert., and Curry, Charles. Children's Interest in Poetry. Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1927.

Jordan, Arthur M. Children's Interest in Reading. Contributions to Education, No. 107. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921.

Kangley, Lucy. Poetry Preferences in the Junior High School. Contributions to Education, No. 758. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938.

Kyte, George C. "Children's Reactions to Fifty Selected Poems." Elementary School Journal, XLVII (February 1957), pp. 331-339.

Mackintosh, Helen K. "A Critical Study of Children's Choices in Poetry." The Elementary English Review, I (May 1924), pp. 85-89.

Marston, Emily. "Children's Poetry Preferences: A Review." Research in the Teaching of English, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1975), pp. 107-110.

Martin, D. R. "Attitude of an Age Group to Poetry." British Journal of Educational Psychology, XVII (1947), pp. 51-52.

Nelms, Benny Frank. Characteristics of Poetry Associated with Preferences of Tenth Grade Students. The University of Iowa, 1967.

Nelson, Richard C. "Children's Poetry Preferences." Elementary English, XLIII (March 1966), pp. 247-251.

Norvell, George W. What Boys and Girls Like to Read. New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1958.

Terry, Ann. Children's Poetry Preferences: A National Survey of Upper Elementary Grades. Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974.

Tom, Chow Loy. "What Teachers Read to Pupils in the Middle Grades," Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1969.

Wissler, Clark. "The Interest of Children in the Reading Work of the Elementary School." Pedgagogical Seminary, V (1897-1898), pp. 523-540.